



# City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

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April 4, 2016

## **TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

**SUBJECT:** Public Hearing to consider the proposed Capital Improvement Program, for fiscal years 2016-2017 through fiscal years 2020-2021.

### **EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING HELD ON: March 9, 2016**

Vice Chair Way read the request and asked staff for comments.

Mr. Fletcher said I would like to thank each of the Department Directors and the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) representatives for being here this evening to answer any questions that the Planning Commission might have regarding the CIP. This is not a presentation from staff. We do have the experts here from each department so feel free to ask any questions you might have. Lastly, I want to make certain that everyone received the amended projects that were part of the School Fund, if not, before you are hard copies that you can replace for existing sheets – pages 89 through 92.

Vice Chair Way said before we begin with discussion and questions regarding the CIP, Dr. Kizner with Harrisonburg City Schools would like to address the Commission.

Dr. Kizner said thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. As you know, two years ago the Harrisonburg School Board and City Council made a very wise decision to have the School Board follow the same CIP process as other departments for the City. It is an ongoing learning experience for us all. What I would like to share with you tonight is that the Capital Improvement Plan in which the School Board approved is not the CIP that was submitted to you.

The School Board feels that if you are here tonight to make an advisory recommendation to the City Council, you should at least have a copy of what the School Board approved. We also recognize that there are things within our plan that were done in October of last year. In October the information seemed to be accurate; however, in March the information is not accurate. A specific example would be that in October 2015 the School Board was considering three different options to address the high school enrollment issues, of which you are familiar with. Since that time, it has been decided to go with a separate building to be built on the High School property; an annex that would serve about 800 students. We also had a joint meeting with the City Council and the consensus at that meeting was to move forward with a request for proposals for architectural services to see if a building could be designed on the property and would other facilities need to be relocated to the other side of Garbers Church Road. We actually did that last week. What I am trying to show you is that the CIP you have received for the HCPSs is not aligned with decisions already made by the School Board.

Our greatest concerns with this are for the purchasing of the land, the year the purchase will take place, and when the building would be built. I know this is a planning document; we do not know what the cost

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would be at this point, we gave a number of what we thought it may cost. What I have learned from this experience is there needs to be greater communication between myself, the City Manager, the School Board, and the City Council, so that we can align a process that works for everyone.

Mr. Da'Mes asked whether in October 2015 the School Board approved a recommendation for the high school.

Dr. Kizner said no, that was done in December. In October we had to get our CIP to the City. Therefore, the two items were not aligned.

Mr. Da'Mes asked when the joint meeting between the School Board and City Council was held.

Dr. Kizner replied January.

Mr. Da'Mes said as you mentioned earlier, you were before Planning Commission a couple of months ago to discuss where HCPS's system was today and what the projected enrollment for the future looked like based on Weldon Cooper projections. I am assuming all decisions to this point have been made based on the same information. Now we have a planning tool, the CIP, that says we are going to push this out to 2021 for the annex building. If that were to be the case, what would the School Board be looking at doing to compensate for that length of time?

Dr. Kizner said in the operating budget for next year we are at 1,630 [students], next year we know we are going to be over 1,700. We are projecting that in 2017 there is a very good chance that we will be at 1,800. We put two trailers in this year and for the budget next year we have four trailers to go in. In reality, that is our alternative – just add trailers. Of course that does absolutely nothing for the core spaces, such as the cafeteria or gymnasium. I do not want to press the alarm button on the annex building; but I can tell you that it is an issue. When you are 300+ students over capacity and you have all these trailers outside you have security issues. There are a lot of reasons why we believe this building needs to happen before the date that the School Board did not approve.

We were hoping that when the RFP's for the building come back, the School Board would make a decision, if an architect met our standards, and a comprehensive analysis could be done on the property. We would then have actual cost figures to begin negotiations with City Council and come to some consensus as to when this annex could really occur. However, when I read the CIP document, it really pushes this date out to a time that we find unacceptable. The thing that needs to be remembered is this is not a modernization of a building; this is because of constant growth within our system. Our growth is not slowing down; in the month of February we gained another 22 students.

I just wanted you to know that the School Board felt that if you are making an advisory opinion to City Council, you should at least have what they actually voted on.

Mr. Colman said I believe this is something that needs to get cleaned up before it moves through us, rather than as it moves through the process.

Mr. Fletcher said Planning Commission needs to understand the sequence of events. The School Board sent the projects to the CIP committee in October, prior to the decision being made about how they were going to be moving forward; they were projecting a completely new high school. Once the decision was made about the \$50 million dollar annex, the committee was just using the logic that the \$160 million was not needed and put the \$50 million in instead, at a time frame that we believe the City would reasonably be able to afford those costs.

Mr. Colman said I find that to be true; however, that is something that needs to be worked out between the School Board and the City Manager before coming to us. I think that Dr. Kizner's argument is valid; but it is not up to us to make the decision.

Mr. Da'Mes said in regard to that I do not think that we should be talking about numbers ourselves, but we have a Comprehensive Plan that we want to make certain our numbers correlate with. Obviously the school system is a big consideration in that plan. What Planning Commission has done in the past is to look at the priority of the CIP item and said that perhaps something should be given a higher priority. We could advise City Council if we feel this HCPCS item needs a higher priority.

Mr. Fletcher said the priorities are somewhat pre-defined, based upon what the definition of the priority is. A priority one is absolutely required, the law requires it to be done. A priority two is highly desirable, increases efficiency, and effectiveness. A priority three is desirable. Thus a priority one can only be granted to a project that is required by law.

Dr. Kizner said I have been in front of Planning Commission three times in the past year; I have been in the position for six years and had never been in front of you until last year. I believe the process is at least being recognized and priorities on the capital side are getting attention. I see all of this as really good. I just think that as something new for us, there are still some kinks that need to be worked out.

Vice Chair Way asked whether the dollar amount for the school annex is correct at \$50 million. The \$160 million was for an entirely new high school, correct? It is more of the 2021 start date that is of concern.

Dr. Kizner replied yes.

Mr. Baugh said that is going to be a substantive issue. We must realize the City Manager recommends putting this into 2021, because from a fiscal standpoint, it looks like we could afford to take on that debt without more tax increases than we may have to do anyway at that time frame. That is what drives this; it does not mean it is carved in stone. If we have real issues on the ground, it may mean moving that date up. City Council will certainly be working with the School Board to do what we need to, even if it means moving that date up.

Mr. Da'Mes said the City Council approves a budget on an annual basis.

Mr. Baugh said yes, but I think you are really looking at debt service. That is thinking about what is the debt service on a \$50 million bond issue and where does it fit with projected income and revenue expenses.

Dr. Kizner said to me it is a lot about a communication breakdown somewhere in the line. Also, a better understanding of the authority of the School Board versus the City Manager when it comes to the CIP for the HCPS system. My understanding and my experience is that the responsibility lies with the School Board; they are the only ones that can change the plan they adopted. So again, it is a process. These numbers have been in the plan since October and if there was a concern back in January or February there should have been conversations then. This could have been taken back to the School Board.

Mr. Da'Mes said the School Board could have a great "wish list," it would be very idealistic, but it does not mean it is necessarily feasible in terms of budget concerns. At the same time it is a planning tool and we have considerations with debt services and we may even move the item up one or two years. What I am thinking is if we all have the foresight to say "it is going to be moved up in a few years," why would we accept a plan that is pushing it out so far? I do not feel comfortable with what is in the CIP currently. My thoughts are to let the conversation continue between the School Board and City Council; is it essential that we push this document forward to City Council today?

Vice Chair Way asked about the implications if we hold this document off for a month to give some time for discussions to take place.

Mr. Fletcher said before we go there, I have my own question for better understanding of this. Is the HCPS Board still doing their own, separate CIP document?

Dr. Kizner replied yes. Two years ago during a joint meeting it was decided that we should follow the timeline that gets us to where we are today.

Mr. Baugh said there has been a whole lot more good about this, but there have been transition issues. With everything else you are actually working with departments that report directly to the City Manager, there is a long standing process and now we are trying to incorporate the School Board into this. It is understandable that there is a communication issue; there are things that need to be worked out.

Mr. Fletcher said if you are thinking you would like a different date for the \$50 million it can be suggested as it moves forward. You can recommend the CIP with suggested revisions.

Dr. Kizner said I would like you to take into consideration the date of 2018, because there could be a new body here and a new City Council in two years and someone says well the approved plan says 2021, so that must be what was meant. HCPS does not get the funding until 2021 and the school is not built until 2023.

Mr. Baugh said that is not how that actually works. 2021 is when we are paying off that debt, so the funding is more to the front side of that rather than the end.

Mr. Da'Mes said that is a good point. I do not think we are in the position to arbitrarily pick dates for these. But I think one thing we can say is we would like to see the School Board's recommendations be more aligned with what is approved.

Vice Chair Way said are you saying that we defer our recommendation?

Dr. Dilts said I believe he is saying that will be our recommendation; that there be some kind of communication between the School Board and City Council on aligning the two CIPs.

Mr. Da'Mes said I believe we have two options; the first is to tell them to come back to us in a month with this resolved. The second option would be to recommend approving the CIP with the recommendation to see more consideration by City Council with regard to the date of 2021.

Dr. Kizner said the School Board feels strongly that they are the only body that has the ability to change their plan, knowing that the City Council has the ability to reject what is within the plan. Secondly, the date, the reason we have it early is because we have an issue today.

Vice Chair Way then asked if there were questions for other department representatives before making any recommendations regarding the CIP.

Mr. Da'Mes said on page 18 under General Fund Projects, it says this will provide for renovations to the Municipal Building for code compliance, energy efficiency, and additional work space for future administration and community use. The cost is \$2.5 million in the year 2018. I have always wondered and never really felt comfortable with the transition from the Municipal Building to the new City Hall in understanding what the future plan was for the older building. I do not think anyone was able to answer the question previously, and since then I have heard numerous other options that may happen; but, my question is should we be investing in a \$2.5 million dollar renovation on a space that we do not have a plan for.

Mr. Fletcher said the explanation on this is as simple as it can be; it is telling you that it will cost \$2.5 million to bring the building into compliance. No one at this time knows exactly how it will be used, but there is a general understanding about how much it is going to cost to renovate the building. We have known for quite some time that the Municipal Building needs some attention as to code compliance.

Mr. Da'Mes said I just have a concern that we are renovating it for a particular purpose and then later we may decide instead to use it for something else.

Mr. Baugh said what you have here is a general place holder in satisfying whatever that use may be. I think what the \$2.5 million figure does is replace and bring into compliance your mechanical systems – wiring, heating/air, and so forth. This is just the projection as to what that may be; it may not even get done on the City's dime. This is not a place marker that is laying out what the particular use will be of the building in the future.

Dr. Dilts said if something is a priority one it is something that absolutely has to happen. On page 12, the Cardiac Monitor replacement is shown as a priority one, but it is not mandated.

Chief Larry Shifflett, Harrisonburg Fire Department, said Cardiac Monitors have a useful service life and these are getting close to their service life. This has to do with technology and the monitor's ability to perform certain functions on the scene. I am not aware of any legislation that says we have to replace at that time, but in comparison to today's technology, what we have is becoming antiquated.

Mr. Fletcher said is there also a component with the manufacturer regarding the useful life.

Chief Shifflett said at the end of the useful service life you lose the support from the manufacturer for repair and maintenance.

Mr. Da'Mes said the Park View Fire Station we have been waiting for a long time now, there is some equipment allocation to the new station; however, under operating costs or impacts, it is a very small number.

Chief Shifflett said the City will have to hire 12 new fire fighters in order to operate that station. We do not have enough people to just move folks there, they must be hired; additionally we will have to buy a new fire engine. We will not need the new engine the same year we occupy the station, it generally takes a year to order and get a new engine; we will just use one of the reserve units as we wait for the new engine.

Mr. Da'Mes said equipment has a certain useful life, and then questioned what happens to the equipment when the useful life is over and whether there is a value brought back to the City?

Chief Shifflett said we have two types of equipment engines and the aerial ladder or tower trucks. We try to replace the engines at a 15 year level and we try to do the aerial ladders at a 20 year level. It is not automatic at that age, we replace in conjunction with the City Shop Foreman as it approaches its useful life; sometimes they get more life, others not so much.

Mr. Colman asked what is the current response time for the Park View area and is it within an acceptable range.

Chief said obviously that depends on which area of Park View you go to; our average time in most areas of the City is four and one half to five minutes. Some of the outer edges of Park View can be seven to seven and one half minutes.

Mr. Colman said in your view is there an immediate need; should this new station be a priority two instead of a three?

Chief Shifflett said the population of the Park View area is growing, there are a lot of retirement facilities in the area and we get a lot of medical services calls that we run.

Mr. Da'Mes asked if the station had been a "moving target" of sorts that continues to get pushed back.

Chief Shifflett said this has been in the budget for quite some time, more than ten years. At some point and time it will be the justified time; but for now it is our place holder.

Mr. Colman said the alternative is to relocate Station 4; has that been considered?

Chief Shifflett said that is a viable alternative; but when you move Station 4 from Rock Street you are increasing response times for the northeast area as well. There is still the same infrastructure cost associated with moving Station 4.

Vice Chair Way asked if there were any further questions regarding the CIP.

Dr. Dilts said I have a question regarding the Police Department regarding the record management and crime analysis system request. I am struck by the language used in the request, “HPD is in urgent need of a comprehensive and efficient records management.” Yet the money you are requesting for is not slated until 2018. As I read this the company that is taking care of your current software is already out of business. Why wait until 2018, why not now?

Captain Tom Hoover, Harrisonburg Police Department, said we are trying to partner this request with Captain Junkins of the Harrisonburg Rockingham Emergency Communications Center and the Rockingham County Sherriff’s Department – the whole records management system that is serviced by the particular company. We have been in need of a new records management system for probably ten years. Our current system is outdated and does not have any capabilities along the lines of what we need. Now that this company will no longer be servicing after 2017 we really need something. I believe there has been some funding from City Council to have consultants look at an overall package for the needs of the City and the County.

Dr. Dilts asked if it will take until 2018 to put together what is needed.

Captain Hoover replied there has been a study group organized to review that; I agree with you and hope that it would be before 2018.

Mr. Baugh said I can confirm there is a working group on this and it is multi-jurisdictional. That is the tough thing about this – something is needed now; but, it is not something you can just go purchase and install. Trying to coordinate all the agencies is a task, but it is absolutely something we are working towards.

Dr. Dilts said I was concerned because it says “urgent,” but gives a date of 2018.

Mr. Baugh said one of the issues that come up is when we are asked for statistical information and we have no way of putting this information together. That is part of the goal we are working for.

Mr. Heatwole said are we anticipating that the RMS needs would be okay until 2018?

Mr. Baugh said I believe Joe Paxton, Rockingham County Administrator, is really the person heading all this up and can give you the most current status report.

Captain Hoover said if our system were to go down tomorrow it would be a lot of work on us, however, I would hate to see us spend unnecessary funds towards a standalone system.

Vice Chair Way asked if there were further questions.

Mr. Da’Mes said I have more of a citizen informational question. On page 48 it talks about the street improvements for exit 247. How is the City funding this project; is it grant funding? It actually seems more like a VDOT expenditure.

James Baker, Director of Public Works, said that is a great question. It is a VDOT project; however, in the current legislation, what they call House Bill 2 Revenues, states that the locality must apply for the funding. We have applied for the funding for that and that is why it is marked as other revenue. We will be intimately involved with the project in helping to raise the project along and helping VDOT with the design because it affects our City so much. But we must apply for these State funds. There are actually three projects in the CIP that are through the House Bill 2 Program – this particular one, exit 245 for the Port Republic Road interchange, and Martin Luther King (MLK) Way/South Main Street.

Mr. Da'Mes said there is a new development planned along East Market Street at the Country Club Property. One concern that was raised was the utilization of Country Club Road and the limitations because of the I-81 bridge overpass near the railroad tracks. Where are we with widening that? Is there any light at the end of the tunnel so to speak?

Mr. Baker said those overpass bridges are not part of the exit 247 project. There are four bridges at the interchange that are in for replacement as part of this project – the two over the railroad and the two bridges that cross I-81 at the interchange. I do not see anything in the near future for improvements on those bridges you are referring to. When those bridges are improved, is when changes to the pier footers, stream bed, and railroad can all be made to improve the movement of traffic.

Mr. Da'Mes said why did the other four bridges get priority over these two bridges?

Mr. Baker said because the Federal Bridge Safety Program identified those as the most critical during safety inspections.

Vice Chair Way said with the MLK Way and South Main Street improvements is there a JMU contribution to that as well?

Mr. Baker replied that the House Bill 2 funding would be State funding, which would be the best for the City and for JMU. If the house funding is not approved, then we are looking at a revenue sharing with the State that would be 50% local funding and 50% VDOT revenue sharing; within that local match we are anticipating a local share with JMU.

Vice Chair Way asked if there were any further questions regarding the CIP.

Dr. Dilts said on page 100 regarding water and sewer funds, there is a mention of the “rural water system;” where is that system?

David Gray, Public Utilities Division Superintendent, said let me start by saying the title that identifies this as “western,” the vast majority of our water system that is outside of our City limits is to the west. This includes Belmont, Monte Vista, and finished water lines that extend all the way to Riven Rock Park. There are some other small areas to the west – Lincolnshire Drive being one, and we treat them differently than the lines in the City because it is a County customer versus a City customer. We make certain the rates applied in the County cover the expenses for the utilities in the County; that is why it is pulled out separately.

Dr. Dilts said so we supply water to the City and some areas in the County and the County citizens pay us money to maintain that infrastructure and for the water itself.

Mr. Gray replied yes. The rates charged to the County customers are intended to cover the cost of those utilities.

Vice Chair Way asked if there were any further questions regarding the CIP. Hearing none, he asked if there was any discussion on the CIP or perhaps a recommendation.

Mr. Colman said I have looked through this document, I do not think I have had enough time to really look at it in depth. We received it on Friday and so it has only been a couple of days. Everything I saw was fine, but ideally I would have like a bit more time than just two days. I am supporting the option of delaying this for another month.

Dr. Dilts asked what the consequence of delay for a month would be.

Mr. Fletcher replied that is a difficult question to answer. It would be good if this was moved forward to City Council the first part of April because of the timing sequence of having the CIP approved prior to budget time periods. If I can speak to one of the thoughts that has come up about additional communication with the School Board and City Council – I would like to question what you mean by

that. A lot of communication has occurred over the past several days and I do not know if additional communication is needed; maybe it should be that they come to some sort of understanding about how this is presented. As staff, we have to put together this package for you, this is our recommendation to you. Is it something you like or are there changes you would like to see? You can suggest those changes and move the document forward.

Mr. Colman said historically the CIP would come to Planning Commission sometime in December.

Mr. Fletcher said historically we have done this as early as November; this year is just as it was last year, in March. The CIP process from a staff perspective starts in July; most people do not realize how long it actually takes. Projects have to be submitted to myself and the CIP committee by September and then we start putting things together, evaluating, scheduling meetings, and so forth. The school projects came in just a little bit later, but that was okay, we have had some staffing issues ourselves as you know. March is probably the latest extent that you want to go with the CIP.

Mr. Colman said I feel that we need to do something; but yet only having a few days to look it through. It begs the question of how much attention are we really paying to it.

Mr. Da'Mes said I can tell you from past years experience that sometimes it has been a simple okay thank you and we pass it on to Council. Our deliberations tonight have shown that it is important to us and we are addressing concerns as it should be. In terms of a planning tool from the staff recommendation, how do we incorporate the School Board's concern into our recommendation?

Mr. Baugh said that City Council already knows all of this information that you are hearing tonight. This issue is at the forefront and it is one of the reasons why so much discussion has been focused on this one piece.

Mr. Fletcher said the replacement sheets that are in front of each of you may be what you are looking for. It captures exactly what the School Board requested. On page 92 regarding the high school annex, you can read the explanation, the note that was written explaining that City Management revised the timing cost of the project to reflect the projected timing of the City's capability to pay for the identified project. It originally came in as \$160 million in the 2017 fiscal year and then the end result was the recommendation put forth by staff.

Mr. Baugh said basically the City Manager is saying it is going to be a whole lot easier to deal with it fiscally if you put it in 2018. I understand School Board's position of "we are not certain that anyone gets to change what we put in the CIP" and the City Manager's position which is School Board cannot adopt a CIP that tells the City when it has to fund items, or even give that appearance.

Dr. Dilts said the issue with the high school annex, I thought, was the timing and not the issue of the money.

Mr. Baugh said yes, I feel the issue right now is over the timing.

Mr. Fletcher said I do not want to put words in the Commission's mouth, but if you are interested in a consideration of recommendation for this time period to be moved up, you can always offer it as a recommendation.

Mr. Da'Mes said I feel that is in line with what our Comprehensive Plan states. It would be a priority over some other important things.

Vice Chair Way asked if there was a motion.

Dr. Dilts moved to recommend moving the CIP forward to City Council, with the suggestion that the date for the high school annex project be moved forward. I also want to say as part of that recommendation,



we owe a debt to each department for the fine work that they have done on putting this together and for the work in general that you do. Thank you.

Mr. Da'Mes seconded the motion and noted that the Superintendent did have two points of concern, the second being the appropriation of the property. We are only addressing the one point regarding the high school annex time line.

Mr. Baugh said that is in progress and is being looked into. It is unknown if property is going to have to be purchased or what the factors for purchasing property would be. All of these issues are being discussed as we try to move in that direction. We know we will be working on this sooner rather than later.

Mr. Colman said I do not know if we need to include this because it sounds like it may be worked out before it gets to City Council; but, the suggestion that the School Board work it out with the City Manager before it gets to Council. That is my recommendation.

Vice Chair Way said the motion before you is to recommend the 2016/17 through 2020/21 CIP to City Council with the emphasis on and language that we have spoken of here. He then called for a voice vote on the motion.

All voted in favor of the motion (6-0).

Vice Chair Way thanked all the City Department Heads and CIP representative for attending tonight.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Alison Banks*

Alison Banks